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ABSTRACT

A program in Jewish Studies is being offered by the Los Angeles Valley College, Van Nuys, California. Courses are offered in elementary and intermediate Hebrew, Contemporary Hebrew Literature in Translation, History of the Jewish People, Hebrew Civilization I and II, Israel: The Theory and Practice of Zionism, Jewish Religious Heritage, The Jew in America, and Yiddish Literature in English Translation. The program was established on the strength of a number of factors: the vital, dynamic force of Judaism in Western Civilization; the need for change in the present situation of Jews in the U.S.; the contribution of Jews in every aspect of human endeavor; the legitimacy of Jewish content classes as courses in the schools of Letters and Sciences; service to the educational needs of some of the largest growing Jewish communities in California; the demand by Jewish college youth that courses be relevant to themselves as Jews; the participation of the Jewish community in enhancing the Jewish studies; and the administrative insight as to the importance of the program. Background, offerings, present standards, syllabus, methodology, characteristics of students and professors, observations in teaching several Jewish Studies classes, and some concluding remarks are presented. (DB)

JEWISH STUDIES AT A TWO-YEAR PUBLIC COLLEGE [AND] LOWER DIVISION JUDAICA: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

by

Zev Garber
Los Angeles Valley College
[1973]

Jewish Studies at a Two-Year Public College

The recent development of a program in Jewish Studies has been announced by Los Angeles Valley College, Van Nuys, California. The program offers courses outlining the history, heritage, and language of the oldest nontheistic people. It is believed that LAVC is the first community college in the nation to offer an AA degree in Jewish Studies.

The Jewish Studies Program (JSP) offers courses in elementary and intermediate Hebrew stressing the fundamentals of the language, the essentials of grammar, practical vocabulary, useful phrases, readings in modern Hebrew prose and poetry, written compositions, and ability to understand and speak basic Hebrew. The class in Contemporary Hebrew Literature in Translation consists of lectures and discussions in English an the Hebrew literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centures, with a background of earlier works. The student reads translations of principal writers of modern Hebrew poetry, essay, short story, and novel.

The class in the History of the Jewish People traces the development of the Jews from their origins in Mesopotamia to the present day. It follows and describes the experiences of the Jewish people in all parts of the world and in all important countries. It analyzes their outlook and philosophy, their habits and customs, their values and ideals. There are two Hebrew civilization courses. Hebrew Civilization I studies the development of the Jewish self-understanding in relation to the intellectual climate of the environment, as expressed in the biblical and talmudic ages. Hebrew Civilization II deals with specific problems and trends in the Jewish heritage during the European and modern periods, covering such topics as Hasidism, Haskalah, Emancipation, Nationalism, Zionism, Holocaust, Third Jewish Commonwealth, and Diaspora Jewry.

It probes the educational, moral, thought, manners, and religious attitudes of the time in an historical setting.

A number of new classes will be presented for the first time in Fall 1972. A course in Israel: The Theory and Practice of Zionism consists of a general survey of the historical development of the area with an emphasis upon the social and political development of the State of Israel. The social and political institutions of the Jewish state are analyzed along with a general survey of the geographic, economic, ethnic, and religious compositions of the land of Israel. An in depth survey is made of the ideological and historical background of the Zionist movement and the Palestinian national movement. The class in the Jewish Religious Heritage comprises an exploration of the major teachings of Judaism. A brief historicll background dealing with the development of Judaism is related to an exposition of its central affirmations. The goal is to familiarize the student with what the Jewish religious tradition regards to be its essential genius and also to provide an opportunity for an appreciation of the similarities and differences between Judaism and the other major religious groups of American culture. Among the class topics are the following: (A) The shape of faith: God, man, rites of passage, Jewish festivals, community; (B) The dynamics of faith: religious commitment and social problems, comtemporary values, and the present state of Jewish belief.

In the Jewish Studies Program is also a class entitled The Jew in America which provides an historical analysis of the Jews in the United States and discusses the essentially social and psychological problems of the Jewish group identity. Much of the course concerns itself with the contemporary scene--the Jewish religious minority in America and its revival, the reasons for it, and the extent to which it expresses religious and spiritual impulses as well as social needs. The contribution of the successive waves of Jewish immigration to this country and western civilization in general is evaluated. Finally, a class in

Yiddish literature in English translation, including poetry, prose, and folksong, from the very beginnings (c. 1382) to the present. Readings from Yiddish medieval romance, through Middle Yiddish, and the "classical" period (Mendele, Sholem, Aleikhem, Peretz), ending with the moderns. The literature is viewed against its social and ideological background. The class includes an analyses of the origin and development of the Yiddish language and its dialect structure. In all these areas there is a considerable corpus of scholarly literature available at UCLA, the State Colleges, and the Hebrew Teachers Institutes in the area. The general library at LAVC has a solid nucleus of books in Judaica, Hebraica, Biblica, and Rabbinics, and this is a direct result of the JSP presence on campus.

The formation of a Jewish Studies Program at LA Valley College was established on the strength of a number of factors:

(a) Judaism, throughout history, has been a vital, dynamic force in Western Civilization, but until recently, has been generally ignored as an academic discipline. Schools under Jewish auspices have always and classes in Jewish content but their success in reaching the general community has been minimal. A number of Christian schools of higher learning offer courses in classical Hebrew language and theology with various degrees of stress but often this is seen as <u>praeparatio</u> for Christianity. A number of department of religions at recognized colleges and universities teach Judaism as a part of the "Judeo-Christian tradition" discipline but these classes by and large coincide with so-called Old Testament thought and post-biblical Judaism, areas that shed light on Christian origins, suggesting that the Jewish people is a nonhistorical entity for the last two thousand years. This void in education has in turn been at the roots of anti-Semitism and ignorance of the Jewish people as a culture and a religion. The time has

come in the post-Auschwitz age to academically present a systematic study of the Jewish people and their traditions as important elements in world culture.

(b) The present situation of Jews in the United States, as is true with other ethnic groups, is in dire need of change. Jewish no ıs, traditions, and culture have been sacrificed in the Jews' attempt to assimilate into the greater American society. It is clear that the melting pot cooks only when the different groups full of complimentary but distinct ingredients assert their individuality. It is essential to recognize that there is something problematic in being a Jew in contemporary society, that besides descriptive courses in Judaism, one needs analysis of problems that Jewishness presents, and that in the social and religious history of the Jews must deal with these aspects as well. In a sense, the desire of Jewish Studies on campuses all over the United States is but an expression of a minority's quest for identity.

(c) The Jewish experiences goes back 4000 years. It is diversified, complex, intellectual. It is not come-by-night phenomenon. Jewish Studies belongs on campus not because of injustices, persecutions, and guilt complexes of the world towards the Jews, but because the Jews have contributed as Jews in every conceivable aspect of human endeavor for the improvement and advancement of humanity. Indeed it is the Hebrew prophet and not the Greek philosopher who had the optimistic dream shared by all men of good conscience today that in the historical future humanity will be one family, oppression, strife, and poverty uprooted when no people will know war any more. Unlike other ethnic programs, Jewish Studies is not only concerned in individual and group identity but interested in investigating the culture

language, religion, nationality and other aspects of the long social civilization of the Jews as seen through their oral and written traditions.

(d) Recently a California state college and a university in the Los Angeles area accepted the legitimacy of Jewish content classes as courses in the schools of Letters and Sciences. If a school honors the study of ancient civilizations, medieval history, and the contemporary Middle East it can now no longer afford to neglect the contributions of the Jews or relegade them to footnote in a class textbook or discussion. It is true that LAVC was offered the Jewish Studies curriculum before it was passed at the university, but UCLA's endorsement of a Jewish Studies major in March 1972 made it easier for the Curriculum Council, which is made up of deans from the community colleges in the district of Los Angeles, to look favorably at the innovation of a Judaica major at a two year college.

(e) The primary function of LAVC, one of the eight public colleges of the Los Angeles Junior College District, is to serve the educational needs of the community. LAVC is located in the Southeast Central portion of the San Fernando Valley, an area of 234 square miles located approximately 15 miles Northwest of downtown Los Angeles. In the decade 1950-1960, the San Fernando Valley was one of the fastest growing urban areas in the United States with a percentage growth of 110%. The decade 1960-1970 saw a much slower growth rate, and the population by the end of 1971 was estimated to be 1,246,177. There are more than 21 communities in the San Fernando Valley that are served directly by LAVC, including some of the largest growing Jewish communities in California if not the United States as a whole. The Jewish Studies Program aids the synagogues and Jewish centers of the San Fernando Valley by serving the academic and cultural needs and desires of the Jewish communities

of No. Hollywood, Sherman Oaks, Van Nuys, Encino, Burbank, Northridge and other local areas.

(f) Unlike previous generations of Jewish American college students, who pursued higher education primarily for its vocational value and its assimilatory benefit, a significant number of today's Jewish college youth has become openly self-assertive in demanding relevancy in college courses, where they can learn about themselves as Jews. Today's involved Jewish youth unlike his parent does not see the Jewish situation as hopeless because of the ubuquitous existence of anti-Jewish elements in the majority culture. On the contrary, the Jewish situation is damned only when the Jew does not feel at ease with his Jewish skin; When he desires the foreskin to be grafted onto himself. Recognition of the facts that the Jewish people is not fossilized and a willingness of the academic establishment to provide the intellectual conditions in which Jews can live productively in their own life styles is a significant step forward in ridding human history in general and western culture in particular of one of its worst crimes. The desire of Jewish student activism that the Jew can do something about the way he looks at himself despite what others might say is legitimized in Jewish Studies classes. Armed with the soundness of knowledge obtained in these classes, the activist Jewish student is able to educate himself, his parents, and his friends both Jew and non-Jew to the reality of Jewish existence, determination, and achievement.

Similarly, a number of faculty members comprehending the academic value of Judacia on campus and its contribution to the survival of American Judaism had become sensitized to a program in Jewish Studies when it was first formulated and presented by the writer. There developed a widespread student-faculty agreement that courses in Jewish content must become a necessary

permanent part of the college curriculum, staffed and coordinated by scholars in the field. The courses in the Jewish Studies Program at LAVC are presently taught by three permanent staff members assisted by four part-time lecturers. They are all identifying Jews who see their rewards not in financial terms but in spiritual-cultural categories.

(g) The external Jewish community has become an important ally of Jewish Studies on campus. Hillel Council at LAVC and other Jewish student groups have enthusiastically encouraged the program from its inception. A number of "adult" students have graciously helped the program by opening up their homes for encounter sessions in Jewish awareness held a number of times during the academic year. These informal rap sessions are enhanced by Shabbatons which make available for a concerted period of time lectures and discussions of a number of aspects of the civilization of the Jews that the students are studying. Local and visiting scholars and personalities give of their talents to these practicums at living Judaism. The potential of the campus as a frontier of Jewish life--the most important one for young people in the 18-25 age bracket--and the place where the allienated Jewish youth may be reached is becoming clearer to the leadership of San Fernando Valley Jewry. There seems to be an interest in Jewish activities on campus beyond the "shadkan" level. The "sheyneh yidn" of the community are being asked to support a Jewish coffee house off campus to benefit young Jews in the area with no strings nor honorary plaques attached. And they are supporting the JSP iniative freely and gladly.

(h) Finally, administrative insight into the importance of the program proved to be present at the very beginning. Not wanting to be accused with helping to perpetuate the misconceptions and misunderstandings which underlie

individual and institutional bias and racism that have plagued Jews ever since their encounter with western culture, the administration staffed overwhelmingly by non-Jews supported the innovation of the problem without any visible static.

The student interest in Jewish Studies seems inexhaustible. This is gratifying and makes all personal sacrifices worthwhile. The program if proven successful can indeed generate new courses such as Sephardic culture, archaeology of Israel, Jewish folklore, Jewish philosophy, Jewish art etc. It can introduce new out of class events such as a Jewish Studies Seminar and visits to Jewish theatre, art, museum etc. A new offering would be circumscribed only by the aims, and restrictions of a community college (e.g. it must be of a lower division standing) and the competency of the Jewish Studies fcculty. A combination of faculty, student, administration, and community interest and encouragement has introduced successfully a new academic program. We express the hope that this development will be strengthened and paralleled in other schools of higher learning where the educational needs of the students they serve require it. And this includes everybody.

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Lower Division Judaica: Problems and Solutions

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In the last quarter of a century the field of Jewish Studies has grown rapidly in American colleges, universities, and seminaries. In recent years a number of scholars has written on the history and perspective of Jewish Studies, trends and goals of Jewish Studies on the undergraduate and graduate level, and on departments and resources.[1] Yet in a recent letter of the Association for Jewish Studies, the observation is made that the discipline of Judaica "presently suffers from problems of standards and definition."[2] It is the purpose of this paper to provide some direction for possible standards in introductory course models based upon the observations that I have made in teaching and coordinating the curriculum of the first Jewish Studies Program (JSP) at a public community college (Los Angeles Valley College, Van Nuys, Ca.).[3] The paper will discuss background, offerings, present standards, syllabus, methodology, characteristics of students and professors, observations in teaching several Jewish Studies classes, and some concluding remarks.

Background Information

Education is the gateway to the promise that tomorrow holds. People the world over look to the American System of free, public education as being unique, as one which continues to sustain, replenish, and extend the vigor and meaning of the freedom of its citizens. A clear expression of this ideal is the Community College. Here the individual defines the extent of his involvement, limited only by his own aspirations and ability. There are 95 public community colleges in the State of California. which enroll over 850,000 students per year: 330,000 full time and 525,000 part time.[4]

The enrollment is more than twice that of the University of California and the State University systems combined and includes 85 percent of all Californians starting their collegiate careers. In 1950, there were 134,000 students enrolled in junior colleges. By 1975, there will be over one million students — an increase of over 700 percent in 25 years. The California junior colleges now represent the largest single collection of institutions

of higher education in the world. Its record of response to the educational needs of the community, its willingness to help solve social ills, and most importantly its desire to make the student a more effective person as a family member, worker, and citizen make the California community colleges one of the most successful stories in the history of American higher education.

The 104-acre Los Angeles Valley College campus is situated in the Southeast Central portion of the San Fernando Valley, an area of 234 square miles located approximately 15 miles Northwest of downtown Los Angeles. Since its formation in 1949, Los Angeles Valley College has experienced tremendous growth and is now one of California's largest public community colleges, enrolling 11,000 day students, 8,500 evening students, and 7,000 summer session students.

The philosophy of Valley College is simple:it exists to meet the educational needs of all people within its community. The scope of its educational services provide the opportunity for the intellectual advancement of an individual in a specific field as well as a broader cultural appreciation which benefits the community at large. The "open door" policy of the College is democratic in that it minimizes the cost of education by offering tuition-free courses and by making it practical for students to live at home, thus encouraging the education of any individual in the community regardless of his economic status. In this respect, Valley College serves society as well as the individual by salvaging talents and skills which would be lost in a state college or university system. The programs at the College are designed to meet the educational needs of today, while undergoing the continual revision necessary to meet the demands of tomorrow. The primary responsibility of the College, therefore, is the student, and this responsibility is met by providing college-level, transfer, occupational, and general education, with the quality of instruction considered paramount. Supplementing the educational program are co-curricular activities to enrich the formal instructional offerings of the College, to provide an opportunity for introducing innovative programs, and to aid the student in understanding himself and his environment. There also exists student services, counseling and guidance, support services, and a strong program in community services.

The latter consists of cultural, recreational, educational, vocational, and community planning programs which the College provides for the community above and beyond regularly scheduled day and evening credit classes. These programs augment and reenforce but do not duplicate programs offered by other public and private institutions and agencies in the community.

Valley College maintains a continuing contact with many segments of the community in order to know the community's needs and the aspirations of its citizens; to know and use its resources, both human and material; and to provide appropriate educational, cultural, and recreational services to the community. After teaching one semester of two sections in Basic Hebrew and one course in Hebrew civilization (Fall 1970), it became clear to the author that the educational neeeds of an important element of the San Fernando Valley[5] could be further enhanced in conjunction with the stated aims, purposes, and philosophy of the College, by proposing new courses in Judaica. A number of faculty members comprehending the academic value of Judaica on campus and its contribution to western civilization and to the survival of American Judaism had become sensitized to a program in Jewish Studies when it was first formulated and presented by the writer. There developed a widespread student-faculty agreement supplemented by community support and interest that courses in Jewish content must become a necessary permanent part of the College curriculum staffed and coordinated by scholars in the field. By mid-Fall 1972 through a combination of faculty planning, administrative foresight, and innovation, student involvement, and off-campus interest and encouragement, the recognition of a new academic program was realized.[6]

The Program in Jewish Studies

The educational program in Jewish Studies at Los Angeles Valley College is designed to provide an opportunity for the student to complete a two-year undergraduate major in Jewish Studies. It consists of 64 semester credits of which 18 are requirements in Hebrew language, Hebrew civilization, Jewish social science, and Jewish literature; a number of electives in Jewish Studies ennable the student to complete the major. In addition to the Jewish Studies classes, students meet graduation requirements by taking required and recommended courses in natural science, social science, humanities, learning skills, health education, and physical education.

The educational objectives of this program are (1) to satisfy the

intellectual and cultural interests of the College community and the citizens living in the area served by the College; (2) to afford students an opportunity to appreciate the rich Jewish heritage in all its aspects; (3) to help students develop an understanding of the unique Judaic contribution to world civilization in general, and to western civilization in particular; and (4) to tell the story often ignored in studies at most colleges and universities of one of the oldest continuing cultures in the history of mankind. The JSP courses are fully accredited and may be applied toward degree work not only at the community college level, but also at Hebrew Teachers Colleges, private and state universities, and in the University of California system.

The Jewish Studies Program offers courses in Elementary and Intermediate Hebrew stressing the fundamentals of the language, the essentials of grammar, practical vocabulary, useful phrases, readings in modern Hebrew prose and poetry, written compositions, and ability to understand and speak basic Hebrew. The class in Contemporary Hebrew Literature in Translation consists of lectures and discussions in English on the Hebrew literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with a background of earlier works. The student reads translations of principal writers of modern Hebrew poetry, essay, short story, and novel.

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A course in Israel: The Theory and Practice of Zionism consists of a general survey of the historical development of the area with an emphasis upon the social and political development of the State of Israel. The social and political institutions of the Jewish state are analyzed along with a general survey of the geographic, economic, ethnic, and religious

compositions of the land of Israel. An in depth survey is made of the ideological and historical background of the Zionist movement and the Palestinian national movement. The class in the Jewish Religious Heritage comprises an exploration of the major teachings of Judaism. A brief historical background dealing with the development of Judaism is related to an exposition of its central affirmations. The goal is to familiarize the student with what the Jewish religious tradition regards to be its essential genius and also to provide an opportunity for an appreciation of the similiarities and differences between Judaism and the other major religious groups of American culture. Among the class topics are the following: (A) The shape of faith: God, man, rites of passage, Jewish festivals, community; (B) The dynamics of faith: religious commitment and social problems, contemporary values, and the present state of Jewish belief.

Several new classes will be offered for the first time in 1974-75. A class in American-Jewish Literature will study a selection of the best in contemporary American writing done by the sons and grandsons of immigrant Jews (e.g., Bellow, Malamud, Roth), after first grappling with a definition for "American-Jewish" literature. The books selected will be read and discussed first, as literature, and second as a reflection of the Jewish experience in America. The class in Jewish Philosophy, Thought, and Culture is a survey of Jewish philosophical thought from Philo to Mendelsohn as reflected in the shifting cultural centers of the Jewish diaspora. The objectives of the course is to present an overall view of the various Jewish philosophical trends and their respective effect upon Jewish socio-religious and cultural expression and especially their impact upon Jewish survival.

In the JSP there is a class entitled The Jew in America which provides an historical analysis of the Jews in the United States and discusses the essentially social and psychological problems of Jewish group identity. Much of the course concerns itself with the contemporary scene — the Jewish religious minority in America and its revival, the reasons for it, and the extent to which it expresses religious and spiritual impulses as well as social needs. The contribution of successive waves of Jewish immigration to this country and western civilization in general is evaluated. The program also offers a survey of Yiddish Literature in English Translation, including poetry, prose, drama, and folksong from the very beginnings (c. 1382)

to the present. Readings are selected from Yiddish medieval romance, through Middle Yiddish, and the "classical" period (Mendele, Sholem Aleikhem, Peretz), ending with the moderns. The literature is viewed against its social and ideological background, e.g., early shtetl and later, big city life; Hasidism; Haskalah; Bundism; Zionism; etc. The class includes an analyses of the origin and development of the Yiddish language and its dialect structure. In all these areas there is a considerable corpus of scholarly literature available at UCLA, the State universities, and the Hebrew Teachers Colleges in the area. The general library at LAVC has a solid nucleus of books in Judaica, Hebraica, Biblica, and Rabbinics, and this is a direct result of the JSP presence on campus.

Present Standards

Lectures, discussions, assigned readings, and written assignments constitute in the main the course requirements in the "thought" offerings of the program. The student is expected to acquaint himself with the major issues, problems, thinkers, and sources related to the course in order to partake in meaningful, academic dialogue regarding those aspects of the culture and civilization of the Jews that he is studying. Class attendance, required readings, class participation, and written assignments in the nature of a mid-term objective examination, and a final examination, which is two hours in length and of essay type (primarily) constitute the minimum requirements for a pass grade (C/D). In addition to the above, each course has its own minimum requirements for a "B" and a "A". For example, in the Yiddish Literature in English Translation class, the prospective "A" or "B" student reads ten paperback Yiddish books in English.[7] No formal book report is required, but a three page impresionistic reaction to each book is written, which is presented orally for class discussion, and then turned in. By "impressionistic reaction" is meant: one's impressions, feelings about the book, how one experienced the book, any questions it may have raised in one's mind, etc. Another approach to increase a student's grade is the research project that is used, for example, in the Jewish Religious Heritage class. Here the student is provided an opportunity to examine in some depth one of the doctrines, practices, life styles, or institutions of contemporary Judaism which is of particular interest to him. Or he may write on one of the topics

developed during the class hour, e.g., the influence of a Jewish religious ethic on Man's life, the nature of revelation, God in the post-Auschwitz age, etc. The research paper, 15-20 pages in length, is done in a constructively critical manner. Personal opinions, "editorializing," unsubstantiated, or undocumented conclusions or arguments, polemics, or personal prejudices or biases are not accepted. The student examines the topic in whatever manner he deems most productive (historically, theologically, philosophically, socially, Scripturally, rabinically, or any combination of several of these), evaluates the vital issues, points out the contradictions, weaknesses, tensions, etc., and makes constructive comments upon them. If the topic as presented is too broad, the student may refine it but only on the basis of a clear statement of what his proposed delimitation is at the beginning of the paper, and only if it also represents a valid context for investigation within the Jewish religious heritage. The structure of the paper is constructed from the viewpoint of the finest style for a research paper, using Kate L. Turabin's A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations or The MLA Style Sheet. Since many of our students are new to college, this research paper presents an excellent opportunity for them to do a structured term paper as a model for future papers. The research paper is viewed as a substantive research effort which demands a lot of reading in various sources, including books, journals, and encyclopedias. To aid the student in the proper research technique, a critique of the term paper and a discussion session are provided by the instructor. Also, a select bibliography of over 400 items not unsimiliar to the bibliographical essays found in The Study of Judaism, edited by Jacob Neusner (ADL, 1972), is affixed to the class syllabus as a guide to those who wish to go further in their study of Jewish life and thought.

All of the "thought" classes are of 3 units, introductory, and topical in scope.[8] No pre-requisite is assumed, and in addition to the standard grading system, an enrolled student may audit the class or take the course on a credit/no credit grade policy.

The basic Hebrew language classes taught in the JSP are a self-contained unit, and are barely connected with the "thought" classes. The Hebrew language is taught in a basic, systematic way. The four fundamental skills of a language : understanding, speaking, reading, and writing, are stressed

from the very beginning. The student is exposed to the structural principles of modern Hebrew grammar, concentrating on linguistic Hebrew. He acquires an elementary and intermediate reading knowledge of vocalized and unvocalized texts in modern Hebrew, with a knowledge of the biblical style. He is able to compose simple sentences and compositions. After two semesters he acquires a basic biblical-modern Hebrew vocabulary augmented with a specialized vocabulary and many useful idiomatic expressions. Development of oral proficiency is achieved by the application of the oral-aural methodology in the classroom, frequent oral question-answer exercises, and a generous use of conversational Hebrew. Carefully graded stories are utilized to promote reading ability and comprehension. Biblical narratives are selected from portions of the Pentateuch, and modern Hebrew stories are based on readings taken from daily experiences, Hebrew history and folklore, and life in Israel and America.

Elementary Hebrew I is an example of a semester Hebrew language course taught at Valley. The five-unit course meets for approximately 4½ hours per week, in sessions of approximately 54 minutes each (adjusted for actual time spent in study of a one hour scheduled class), or approximately 81 hours per semester. Of this time about two-thirds is devoted to numerous and varied exercises, drills, lectures explaining the philology, morphology, syntax, and dialectology of the complex Hebrew grammatical structure, etc., and one-third to an audio-visual appreciation of the language. Students are able to complete all of the significant grammar in the assigned text,[9] and about three-quarters of the textual readings. Weekly homework assignments, and three comprehensive one-hour examinations are given, plus a two-hour conclusive final. Students are obligated to spend an additional hour per week in the language laboratory, reviewing the oral-aural material on the tapes based on the textual material. The reading of unvocalized Hebrew sentences and the writing of simple compositions are major foci at the end of the semester.

It is not particularly difficult to teach beginners Hebrew to English speakers, once the barrier of a totally unfamiliar alphabet is overcome (and one must not underestimate the time needed to overcome the first barrier). For despite the totally different linguistic principles underlying the development of the two languages, contrastive analysis is a very fruitful method of teaching Hebrew grammar, since the sentence structure and word

order of the two languages are directly comparable. Of course, the instructor must be certain that students are familiar with the principles of English grammar first. The time to review these is well spent, and students quickly become sensitive to the skills necessary to analyze and apply the principles of Hebrew grammar. It is in this area especially, that the instructor needs to develop written exercises and drills lacking in most textbooks. I personally have found that a study of basic textbooks in modern European languages yields much help here.

A major problem in this class is the lack of a good text. In past semesters, students were not enthusiastic about the textbook, and were undoubtedly influenced by the instructor's frequent emendations and corrections needed to bring it into line with contemporary Hebrew. The reading selections, with some particular exceptions, came in for criticism as feeling archaic. For many years there existed no textbook on the market which is adequate or up-to-date for college level instruction in modern Hebrew. Moshe Greenberg's Introduction to Hebrew (Prentice-Hall, 1965) and Thomas O. Lambdin's Introduction to Biblical Hebrew (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971) are excellent philological textbooks designed for courses in elementary Hebrew, but at the biblical level, though Greenberg's text is designed to present biblical Hebrew as a living language. Recently, however, two texts, totally independent one from another and each one based on many years of classroom instruction have appeared and despite some short comings will aid in filling the lacuna. The textbooks are: L. Uveeler and N.M. Bronzwick, Hayesod (New York, 1972), and M. Feinstein, Basic Hebrew (New York, 1973).

The two-year Hebrew language program at Valley is architectonic. Elementary Hebrew I is structured to lead to Elementary Hebrew II which continues the presentation of grammatical forms, provides additional training in oral and written composition, and reading. Intermediate Hebrew I provides further amplification of grammar, and readings of texts from modern, biblical, and medieval/rabbinical literature. Intermediate Hebrew II completes the presentation of grammar (essentially, the Hebrew verb and noun); readings of unvocalized texts, primarily of modern literature; introduction of newspaper Hebrew; and ample opportunity for compositions and conversations.

The language classes, supplemented by a variety of audio-visual aids, such as tapes, filmstrips, recordings of Hebrew songs, etc., are designed

to provide (1) knowledge of basic fundamentals of Hebrew structure; (2) a knowledge of current Israeli Hebrew necessary for everyday speech and comprehension; (3) a cognizance of Hebrew linguistics; (4) a solid background for advanced Hebrew; (5) preparation for textual classes in Bible, medieval, and modern Hebrew poetry, essay, prose, and newpaper Hebrew; and (6) an introductory appreciation of important aspects related to Hebrew culture and the civilization of modern Israel.

Characteristics of Students

Based on questionnaires submitted to 1150 graduate students who enrolled in a Jewish Studies class during the academic years 1970-73, we are able to draw the average composite picture of a student taking our classes. The following summary is based on the response of 1045 students. Figures for characteristics 3, 4, 5 pertain to when the student was enrolled in a Jewish Studies offering.

1. Sex: Male - 59%, Female - 41%
2. Marital Status: Single - 70%, Married - 30%
3. Age Group: Under 18 - 2%, 18 - 15.1%, 19 - 15.2%, 20- 10.2%, 21- 6.5%, 22-24 - 16.6%, 25-29 - 13.9%, 30-39 - 10.2%, 40 + Over - 10.3 %
4. Status: Freshman - 67%, Sophmore - 16.1%, 60+, A.A. Degree or Higher- 16.9%
5. Nature of Enrollment

   New Students

   From High School - 24.8%
   From Other Colleges - 19.5%

   Continuing - 39.6%

   Re-entering - 16.1%
6. Years to Complete Degree: 2 Years- 25%, 2½-3 Years - 40%, 3½-4 Years - 14%, 4½-7 Years - 13%, Over 7 Years - 8%
7. Units Taken in Evening Division: None - 34%, 1-9 - 36%, 10-19 - 14%, Over 19 - 16%
8. Employment: Full time - 23%, Part time - 60%, None - 17%
9. Resident Status: Yes - 96.7% No - 3.3%
10. Veteran Status: Yes- 2.4%, No- 97.6%

11. Transfer Status: Transfer - 80%, Non-Transfer, Occ., etc. - 20%

A. Students enrolled in the occupational (terminal) programs were distributed as follows: Business - 50% ,Police Science - 15%, Nursing - 8%, Home Economics - 5%, Electronics and Engineering Technology - 5%, Others - 17%

Others include art, fire science, theater arts, journalism, etc.

B. The academic majors among transfer students were roughly distributed as follows: Liberal Arts (General Education) - 25%, Business - 11%, Behavioral Sciences - 10%, Social Science - 9%, Education - 6%, Art and Architecture - 6%, Biological Sciences - 5%, Engineering - 5%, English - 4%, Music - 3%, Theater Arts - 3%, Others - 13%

Others include foreign language, earth science, law, mathmatics, physical science, philosophy, etc.

12. College of Transfer: State Universities - 55%, University of California - 15%, Private - 8%, Undecided - 7%, None - 15%

13. Ethnic Survey: Jewish - 76%, Christian (all denominations) - 12%, Others - 6%, No Response - 6% .

The average Jewish student comes from a moderate Jewish background with synagogue affiliation more traditional (61%) than liberal or modern experiential (30%); 9% no response. He has received an elementary Jewish education (90%), probably in the afternoon Hebrew school (60%) rather than in the all day Jewish school (10%) or Sunday school (20%). 55 percent of the respondents are the products of secondary Jewish education, including 7% who studied in all day Jewish high schools, 30% who finished in Hebrew afternoon high schools, and 18% who finished confirmation programs. Approximately two-thirds have been to Israel (23%) and/or had experiences in Jewish content camps (40%). Specific questions regarding the background of Gentile students are lacking and should be a desideratum for future surveys.

The study also showed that fully 94% of the students came from the 21 Valley communities served by the College. Many are classified in the stable working class or lower middle class with a small portion from the professional-managerial and lower classes. Time and time again the respondents indicated their reasons for iniately registering in a Jewish Studies class to be (1) self-identification with one's heritage; (2) an essential introduction to the accomplishments of the Jewish people; (3) a meaningful academic experience. A very high percentage

of non-Jews wished to attain a better appreciation of Jewish traditional concepts, values, and practices; a very small percentage cited "a better understanding of the Judaic element in Christianity," "reasons of conversion," and "missionary work among Jews."

Course enrollments in Jewish Studies classes average 45 students per class to start with an attrition rate well below the college average: 6% in "thought" classes and 10% in language classes. Discussion made it clear that few students needed or wanted the course credits, but were motivated mainly by other factors than academic-record keeping. Of those who dropped out within the first few weeks, most believed the course would demand much less time and work than it actually did. Other factors cited were family, economic (job, financial), and personal-social. Probably the student (disinterested in class, bored, immature, bad study habits, lack of iniative or motivation, too heavy a load, not used to college level work, lack of ability or confidence, etc.) and/or instructor (poor or apathetic, student conflict, attitude-personality, demands, pressure, deadlines, presentation, etc.) factor(s) played more of a role for class withdrawal than cited. Student evaluation of professorial instruction was from adequate to outstanding;a poor rating was so small as to be negligible. Essentially, the Jewish Studies instructor showed interest in the subject matter; was well organized and structured his course; showed a willingness to help his students in and outside of class; used class time productively; conducted the class at a reasonable pace; encouraged appropriate student participation; was fair and impartial in his treatment of students; tests and written assignments were appropriately critiqued and returned with reasonable promptness; stimulated thinking about the course material; was opened to students' ideas and was tolerant of disagreement. The appropriateness of the workload, considering objectives and level of course was rated fair, and in language classes the instructor's ability to speak and teach in Hebrew was considered very good.A significant percentage of students (30%) indicated that they have taken or are planning to take more than one course in Jewish Studies before finishing the B.A. Also, the figures showed that in 1972-73 — the only valid year in the survey for this trait — 35 students registered as Jewish Studies majors. Seventeen of

the majors indicated Jewish education as their career choice; 7 preferred Jewish community work, including the rabbinate; 3 were preparing for Israeli universities; 3 intend to immigrate to Israel; and 5 were undecided. About 1/3 of the majors were paralleling their classes in Jewish Studies at a Hebrew Teachers College. Finally, in Spring 1973 14 students were inducted into the tenth chapter of Eta Beta Rho, National Hebrew Honor Society, under the auspices of the National Association of Professors of Hebrew.[10] The Kappa chapter of Eta Beta Rho, the first in California, stimulates and spreads interest on and off campus for the Jewish Studies Program at Valley; provides tutorial aid in Hebrew language; obtains scholarship, job, advance study information; and co-sponsors with the Jewish Studies faculty the semi-semester Jewish Studies seminar.

Notes on Syllabus

Syllabus is broadly defined to include course description, course objectives, content of lectures, bibliography, written assignments, methodology, and the assignment of grades. An encouragement of the students' role in both planning and conduct of the class was attempted in several sections of the class on Israel: The Theory and Practice of Zionism. This approach provided for greater feedback through increased participation on the part of the students, although their suggestions were subject to the final approval of the instructor. Greater motivation for learning appeared to take place when students offered their ideas toward formulation of class syllabus. They particularly enjoyed the challenge to submit the groundrules for grade assignments. In lieu of the examinations they opted for oral and written assignments, stressing areas in which they felt a weakness or a special interest.

A recommendation in this area is the formulation of a student fact-finding committee, representing a cross-section of students' backgrounds and interests, that meets periodically with the instructor and provides a source of frank dialogue identfying learning problems, such as a class lecture or assignment, which may have appeared irrelevant to the student. Thus, an important correction can be made for future presentations. A larger, but similiar, student-faculty steering committee can be set up yearly to evaluate the JSP, relevancy of course content and objectives, level of instruction, and provide suggestions for new curriculum development.

Notes on Methodology

Flexibility, innovation, implementation, interest, relevancy are some characteristics of good teaching methodology. The college classroom should not serve as a podium for intellectual masterbation or be a forum for undisciplined bull sessions. Some information and delight may develop from such performances but little intellectuall honesty and proper learning habits can result. Emphasis on relevancy should be student oriented so that, students are involved in finding meaning on an individual basis. This may be acheived by the implementation of a teaching style that dialogs with the students as much as is possible and develops intellectual talents such as comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation rather than the regurgitation of class notes as objectives of written assignments. The topics method for class lecture, discussion, and participation is a successful device in "thought" classes. In the basic language classes, students are encouraged to recite in Hebrew and to keep notebooks —— not the scribbled jottings derived from a lecture hour, but thoughtfully composed summaries of aspects they had learned in Hebrew theory, linguistics, and grammar. Audio-visual aids and techniques (filmstrips, tapes, music, dance, motion picture, etc.) are important features of a language class, and in a program which encourages experimental teaching are used successfully in supplementing course lectures.

The traditional methods of teaching modern literature in the original, found in upper division and graduate courses, viz., translation, expounding of grammatical intricacies, lectures based on instructor's notes from graduate seminars, etc., prove less than adequate at a lower division level. In its place is substituted an historical-critical method which emphasizes the literature as an interpretation of history and in light of other literary works in general, and contemporary Hebrew works in particular. A moderate number of readings from Hebrew poetry, prose, and essay is suggested. One-third of the class time constitutes lectures on the socio-historical forces which have motivated and shaped Jewish life during the last two centuries. Two-thirds of the class hour are devoted to a direct explaination of the assigned texts in order to discern the major values and trends of modern Hebrew literature. A study of literature must not be confused with the history of literature, and thus a confrontation with textual sources more than histories and commentaries is of first importance.

A deeper appreciation of Hebrew literature develops if the instructor plays more of a passive role than is traditionally assigned to him. By encouraging the student to do research at home in order to explicate the text in class, and answer questions of difficulty from his peer group, the instructor is planting in his student seeds of loyalty to some great literature which otherwise would not grow from the total lecture method that often detaches the student from the material. Furthermore, the student gains self-respect from such an exposure, his own germaine ideas are able to sprout, and a relaxed teacher-student relationship is created. This direct method also ennables the professor to grow in stature as an educator. By playing the role of a class catalyst, he has many opportunities to present his own contribution and to refine it in light of class feedback to a greater degree than he could by using the straight lecture method. An ideal educational experience is thus fulfilled since the goal of discovering provocative ideas of great men and women of letters is brought about by professor and student exploring together.

Notes on the Jewish Studies Professor

That professors tend to teach as they are taught rather than be influenced by contemporary pedagogical research, is all too true. Since this is so, it is especially important that a professor of Jewish Studies does not follow the trend for this can play an important factor in bringing about the demise of a new program since the classes are not required and the student can lose interest. Teaching sins that make an instructor ineffective and inhibit learning include: lack of preperation and organization in the presentation of the material; not involving students in the learning process, in what is going on in class; inability to recognize individual strengths, and weaknesses of students, and to work with individual needs; lack of knowledge of the subject; not realistic in the assignment of goals and objectives; lack of effective teaching techniques; the use of sarcasm in chiding the students; too formal, nervous, and the use of hostility in treating students as an automated IBM number and not as human beings; disinterested and does not like to answer questions; insensitive to constructive criticism from peer group and students.

The professor of Jewish Studies must be an independent individual who will not compromise himself by dishonesty, silence, or inaction. No security or acceptance including tenure must be placed before his responsibility as a

teacher, no matter what critical issue he deems fit to discuss and argue in class. He must see himself as a leader in a learning process who brings fresh data to bear each time he teaches a class. He must guide and inspire his students and make the academic hour fruitful and useful. He should be conscientious in his research so that his knowledge is updated and current, and not fall back on stuffy, obsolete lecture notes. The seperation between teacher and student becomes smaller and less ominous if he should spend time with his students outside the classroom in informal sessions over coffee, club activities, and off-campus getogethers. He should make himself available for conferences to guide students in developing their research and study habits. He should invite students to examine a variety of options currently held about the same problem without necessarily feeling that he must supply all the answers. It is true that the allocation of a teacher's time is in many areas: he spends time in class, prepares lessons, grades papers, does research, counsels students, participates in organizations and in committees. But the successful teacher solidifies all the roles into one necessary obligation.

A number of myths exist among senior professors of Wissenschaft des Judentums which have no place in lower division Judaica. One myth is that what we need to teach are facts, statistics, figures and more facts, statistics, figures. The students are talked at without mercy, and this is not necessary. What is needed is more effective teaching. Learning involves not only information given but the recipients' discovery of what that knowledge means. The teaching experience is incomplete if one without the other were to prevail. This is the excitement of learning and teaching alike. Another myth is that a Ph.D. is the guarantee of a good teacher, and that the brilliant researcher is capable of communicating his scholarship in the class room situation. The fact is — and student surveys bear this out time and time again — that a good researcher becomes a good teacher only if he works at it. This is not to say that research and publication are exclusive of a professor's total role on campus, but to stress that his first responsibility is to be a competent teacher and good teaching does not necessarily mean scholarship. Similiarly, the "specialized scholar" of Judaica who claims that there are principles and concepts of Jewish historiography too profound for the novice to grasp and thus skips over them in his lectures

underestimates the ability of a college educated person, and would not be successful in teaching lower division Judaica. Finally, there is the myth that the subject matter alone creates the enthusiasm for course learning. This is only partially true. The personal charm of a teacher can stimulate learning as well. The enthusiasm of an instructor to his subject matter, a stimulating voice pattern, an exciting delivery style, etc., do make the difference between classroom boredom and a living teaching experience.

Notes on Students Enrolled in Jewish Studies

It appears that no one has seriously addressed himself to the needs of an introductory class in Judaica offered at the level of a community college. There are a number of problems at this level which are not found in more advanced classes. First, as we have shown elsewhere,[11] a large percentage of students will take only one course in Judaica in their undergraduate careers. Secondly, the academic preferance among "Introduction" students is very diversified. Thirdly, the reason for taking the class differs from student to student. Given this heterogenous complexity it is wrong for a professor to design a class which is strictly "academic" in form and scope. The first class, let us say in Hebrew civilization, should be a pleasant journey into the origins, growth, and development of Hebrew culture in the various fields. The procedure would require the assignment of materials which live up to college standards relevant to lower division university courses and at the same time touch upon art, geography, music, folklore, literature, and other particularistic interests. The object is to turn the student on in a challenging way. Guest lecturers, library, theatre, and museum trips, food experiences, slides, and other audio-visual materials are indispensable, and methodologically provide a painless, sensuous experience into Hebrew culture.

Of the many aspects of the learning process, perhaps the most frustrating is the cross purpose of students and professors. Nowhere is this more keenly seen and felt than in a freshman survey class. The professor's lectures are for the most part not understood, and his intelligence is further insulted by the students' seeming anti-intellectualism. He blames his failures on his young chargers. He vents his dissatisfaction by popping quizzes, assigning busy work, asking trick questions on exams, and springing a host of other tricks which

which only a professor's ghoulish mind can issue. Students become apathetic, turn off, and consider class attendance a punishing jail sentence.

In reality the problem grows out of the diversified roles played by the professor and the student. The professor sees himself as a knowledge dispenser, developing a new generation of scholars who share his philosophy and concerns, and are willing to spend infinite hours reading, researching, writing, and discussing the problems at hand. The average student does not have the scholarly way as defined by the professor. He is a tradesman interested only in the bare essentials of the job: what, where, when, how is required of him to obtain his grade. He could care less about schools of thought, philosophy, sociology, history, literary analysis, linquistics, theoretical abstractions; he is interested only in the here and now.

The nature of a college program, survey classes included, is such that a professor does not trust his student and a student does not trust his professor. Students are regimented through a structured program which gives them little time to reflect, think, and mature. No wonder passivity and inertia set in. To rectify this problem the professor should help his student understand the beauty of being a professional and not a mere worker, and bridge the distance between theoretical intellect and practical situations. The bridging process should begin as a student starts college and be further embellished as he goes through school.

An interesting phenomenon in the JSP is the attraction it has for the adult returner who has been away from formal education for a number of years, and for the most part is not interested in obtaining a degree. Many take the evening classes for adults which maintain the same standards of attendance and scholarship and carry the same college credit as day classes. However, students may elect to take these classes without credit, if they so desire. A number of these students are professionals (lawyers, doctors, teachers), but the preponderance consist of housewives over 35, married daughters of immigrant Jews. The adult returner highly motivated but lax in study habits and discipline presents a different challenge to the instructor than one who goes directly into college from high school. The latter thinks like a student, in terms of grades, assignments, exams, deadlines, etc., but the former is more concern

with the importance of what he studies to his own daily life style. What he may lack or has forgotten in the fundamental skills of reading, writing, understanding, and appreciation, he makes up for by his determination and enthusiasm. He is slow to learn a linguistic principle, or penetrate an analytic lecture note unless it is totally analysed and fixed in his mind. When this occurs he is very helpful in presenting examples many of which come from his own background to help illustrate the point under discussion. Adults tend to be talkative, mature, and single-minded about their new alternative in life. They are appreciative of teacher's criticisms, encouragement, and recognition of their accomplishments. Though there are different reasons why the returning adults come back to Jewish Studies (further education, vocation, keeping up with their son, the synagogue macher, etc.), perhaps the most significant one is a middle-aged yearning for something warm they left behind and want to return to: perhaps they want now to remember that which they had earlier in the process of acculteration wanted to forget.

Some Observations in Teaching Jewish History

Some of the major problems surrounding a course in Jewish history are the enormous amount of material that must be covered, the categorical areas studied, and the traditional methodology used. To survey in one semester 4,000 years of the political, economic, religious, and cultural history of the Jews from biblical to modern times by the usage of maps, figures, facts, and other statistics can be a task of rather monumental proportions. And to many students — LAVC college reports show that between 15 to 20% of the students benefit from a chronologically arranged history course — one colossal bore. A solution to this problem is a restructuring of the class goals to stress aspects of Jewish history. Here a study of the development of the Jewish self-understanding can be undertaken in relation to the climate of the environment, as expressed in the Bible, in Halacha, in philosophy, in mysticism, and in contemporary thought. An alternate solution is the teaching of Jewish history through fiction which shifts the course curriculum from subject matter to activity, from subjects of study to experience. The reading of Jewish novels is a Jewish experience and is more popular than Jewish historical reading in fashioning meaningful, lasting ties to an appreciation of the Jewish civilization. A good story provides a more vivid and intimate insight into life than does a textbook. A text must generalize but a story makes the subject more particular and personal. In addition, the novelist gives a different dimension to what

"being Jewish" means than is found in the "heavy" findings of an anthropologist, theologian, historian, social scientist, etc.

An effective way of teaching Jewish American history, for example, is through literature. The readings selected can fall into four major categories: The Old-World roots; The immigration period; Struggle and assimilation; Success and inner conflict.

The Old-World Roots

I. The writers read are selected from the writings of the early classicists, such as Mendele, Peretz, Sholom Aleichem, Fineman, Levin, to develop an understanding of the socio-economic and political background of the Jewish immigrants. Life in the shtetl, the urban ghettoes, are explored through the literature of the period.

II. The Immigration Period

Readings are selected from the works of Isaac Bashevis Singer and his brother I.J. Singer, Abe Cahan, Sholom Asch, Elmer Rice, Leah Morton, L. Lewisohn, and others who described the making of a new life in a new country. The effect of the Haskalah and the Hassidic movement are discussed as it relates to the changing environment encountered by the Jewish intellectuals.

III. Struggle and Assimilation

The literature of the new immigrants as they struggle to survive and to assimilate is chosen from the works of Michael Gold, Henry Roth, David Fuchs, I. Shaw, A. Miller, I.B. Singer's short stories, I. Babel, and others. The changing socio-economic patterns of the Jewish immigrants are viewed through this period's works.

IV. Success and Inner Conflict

The modern writers, such as Malamud, P. Roth, Bellow, H. Gold, Kazin, Wallant, Levin, and others are studied to acheive an understanding of the Jewish experience in America today. The apparent success of the contemporary Jewish author has contributed to his needs for self-study and analysis of his current status in American society.

In connection with each book, a number of questions are provided for the study of the work, and for extracting the significant facts related to the aspects of Jewish American which the book purports to cover. Some of the points raised are, what can we learn from the author's life?; is his style distinctive?;

age and type of Jew portrayed; historical background and implications of the story; changes in the religious life of the Jew caused by changing economic and political factors; changing social mores and scientific beliefs and the Jewish destiny in America; the Jewish minority in an overwhelming Gentile environment; what message is there for the continuation of Jewish life, etc.

Class discussions revolve totally around the participation of the student who is encouraged to look for the answers to the above questions in each of the books that he reads. The instructor's role is only to summarize important points made; keep the discussion relevant; and uncover significant aspects often unnoticed or overlooked by the participants. Whereas the ordinary text course usually degenerates into a sterile atmosphere with a lecturer and a class of listeners, an approach to history through fiction can become a lively affair because of the active participation and self-expression of the members of the class.

Anatomy of a Jewish Studies Class [12]

Yiddish Literature in English Translation is an unusual class offering of the JSP at LA Valley College. Due to the rarity of such a class on campuses across the nation,[13] I think that it would be helpful to share with you some of the problems encountered in teaching the class at LAVC, in the Spring Semester, 1973.

- The lopsided, skewed portrait of Yiddish Literature that emerges when it is read in translation only.
- A preconception about Yiddish Literature, that it is somehow primarily religious in nature.
- The idea that the shtetl is the only source and background for Yiddish Literature.
- A lack of knowledge of the religious and cultural background which provides ground for much of the most secular, even anticlerical, Yiddish Literature.
- A lack of linguistic sophistication: students still uncertain as to the status of Yiddish as a language.
- An attitude towards Yiddish Literature of at worst, condescension, or at best, nostalgia — in short, an attitude ignorant of the considerable acheivements not only in Yiddish belles lettres, but of Yiddish scholarship,

criticism, historiography, social science, and linguistics.

1. The Skewed Portrait

An instructor of a course in Russian Literature in English translation would be able to send his students to the college bookstore, or some larger book emporium, and there they would find almost all the major works of the Russian masters in good, inexpensive paperback translations: Turgenev, Checkow, Gorky, Gogol, Pushkin, even Oblomov and Nekrasov, not to mention Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky.

How different the situation is for Yiddish Literature in English Translation. Of the three masters and founders of modern Yiddish Literature, Mendele, Sholem Aleikhem, and Peretz, students of Yiddish Literature in Translation would find decently presented in the paperback sections of the bookstores only Sholem Aleikhem, Of Mendele, they would only be able to find one novel in paperback, The Travels of Benjamin III. Of Peretz, nothing: none of the translations have been issued in paperback, and the two or three Peretz hardcover translations are out of print. Of the pre-Mendele, Haskoleh literature (Ettinger, Aksenfeld, Gottlober, Dick, Lefin, Levinsohn, etc.), nothing has been translated. Of the Khassidic Literature, they would find only some of the Buber renditions. Of the early Yiddish Literature (from the 14th through the 17th centuries), there are virtually nothing available in translation: to be sure Glikl of Hamoln, Ma"ase Bukh, and parts of the Tsene Ureene have been translated into English, but they are out of print in hard cover; they were never available in paperback.

What would the students be able to pick off the shelves in addition to those mentioned above. Most, or all, of I.B. Singer"s work; some of Sholem Asch"s novels, primarily the "Christological" ones; I.J. Singer's Yoshe Kalb; and Buber"s free rendition (not translation) of The Tales of Reb Nekhman.

In addition to these, the students would find the Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg anthology, A Treasury of Yiddish Poetry, in paperback; the other two books of Howe's and Greenberg's trilogy of translations--A Treasury of Yiddish Stories and Voices From the Yiddish (a collection of essays, memoirs, and assorted prose pieces)--are now available in expensive hardcover editions only.

Finally, the students who dig deeper will find some translations from Yiddish available in two excellent collections of memoirs translated from various languages: The Golden Tradition (by Lucy Dawidowioz) and Memoire of My People (by Leo W. Schwarz).

That is about all the instructor and his students will have to work with. The result will be a distorted picture of Yiddish Literature, i.e., a literature that has no beginning and no middle, just an end. And even the end, i.e., the writers of the modern period, will be present only in fragments.

2. The Secularity of Yiddish Literature

We have found among our students, and also among people we meet when we tell them we teach Yiddish Literature, a response that indicates an association of Yiddish with the shul, rabbi, bar mitzvah, a pious grandfather or grandmother, a wistful expression of regret over a drifting away from religiosity and Judaism.

These are, after all, honest and real associations. But it doesn't prepare students properly for a course in Yiddish Literature. It is like someone sighing over a falling-away from Greek Orthodoxy when told about a class in Russian Literature, or someone associating Anglicanism with a seminar on Byron, Shelly, and Keats.

Not that the traditional Judaic background is not important to Yiddish Literature; it is. Not that one doesn't need to know and understand traditional Judaic beliefs, practices, customs, etc., to fully understand much of Yiddish Literature; one should. The point is that a student is completely disoriented for a class in Yiddish Literature -- unprepared for Leyvik, Reisin, Manger,

Moyshe Leyb Halpern, Berlson, Zhitlovsky, Madem, even Peretz - - if he comes to the Literature with a rental set that pictures only gentle rabbis, pious grandmothers, and the old shtetl, steeped and isolated in Judaic orthodoxy. Yiddish Literature is, in the main, a secular, national-cultural development that arose despite and away from traditional orthodoxy. Talmudic students read Mendele and Peretz (not to mention Mapu and Smolenskin) at the risk of expulsion from the Yeshiva and/or social disapproval. This has to be explained to many students who are reading Yiddish Literature extensively for the first time, so that they can read it in the clearest possible light.

3. Shtetl Nostalgia

The idea that the East European shtetl, full of good, pious Jewish souls, forms the total milieu, backdrop, background, source, inspiration and material for Yiddish Literature, is another misconception closely allied with the one just noted. It seems to arise from a sort of shtetl nostalgia spurred on by modern, American, urban alienation, by Fiddler on the Roof, and by a total ignorance of urban proletarian Jewish life in Eastern Europe, of the rise of the Jewish Labor movement, of the Zionist movement, Yiddishism, Hebraism, of figures in modern East European Jewish life such as S. Dubnow, Achad Ha'am, Khaim Zhitlowsky, V. Sokolow, H. Erlich, V. Alter, Bronislaw Grosser, M.M. Vinaver, N. Birnbaum, David Pinski, N. Shtif, Ber Borochov, and, even Zalman Shazar and Chaim Weizmann.

Such movements, leaders, and intellectuals provided the impetus, as well as the readers, for modern Yiddish (and Hebrew) Literature. Jewish life in Eastern Europe consisted of the shtetl as the "source," with these modern social/economic/cultural movements growing out of and reacting against shtetl life and shtetl values. From the shtetl alone, and all it implies, comes no modern, secular Yiddish (or Hebrew) Literature. From Bundism, Socialism, Zionism, Haskoleh, Yiddishism, Folkism, Hebraism, Diaspora Nationalism, etc., with, perhaps, the shtetl as base or life/value source, or that which is reacted against, and sometimes romanticized, as well as realistically portrayed, comes our modern Yiddish (and Hebrew) Literature.

4. Ignorance of Religious and Cultural Background

Although, as stated above, modern Yiddish Literature is basically secular in nature and a development away from the life-style and outlook of the shtetl, nevertheless, modern Yiddish Literature, no less then early and middle Yiddish Literature, is not entirely understandable without some grounding in Jewish sacred writings, Jewish orthodox traditions, customs and beliefs, as well as some familiarity with the culture-- in the anthropological sense-- of the shtetl. Many of the students came to a course in Yiddish Literature in Translation without a proper conception of what the course of study in the Khader and Yeshiva consisted of in Eastern Europe, nor what day-today life was like in the Pale up to WW II.

Consequently many allusions in the writings of Leyvick, Glatshteyn, Grade, Reisin, atc., and, most assuredly, Sholem Aleykhem, Mendele, and Peretz, are not understood, have to be explained. Tevye's quotes and misquotes, for example, need footnotes and explications. A poem such as Reisin's "Mi Komashmi Lon Der Regn" cannot be read and understood if the traditional mode of study, which it echoes, is not known. Mendele's Travels of Benjamin III appears disembodied, to some extent puzzling, if not set in the context of shtetl mores and weltanschauung. Notions such as Khapper, kept, nadu, pogrom, eyruv, taytshn, paskenen a shayle, etc., should be part of the student's conceptual framework.

To some extent, however, the background is the literature, i,e., is reflected, portrayed, brought to life, in the literature. Reading Yiddish Literature is an excellent way to get at the shtetl mores, and even at a measure of understanding of the method and content of Talmudic study. Some "orientation," however, either before or simultaneous with the readings, will make them more quickly and completely comprehensible. This can be accomplished directly through lecture/and/or through the assigning of "background readings" in, say, The Living Talmud,

By Judeh Goldin; The Sacred Books of the Jews, by Harry Gersh; Zohar, by Gershom Scholem; Life is With People, by Zborowski and Herzog, etc.

5. Status of Yiddish

The time of vehement and complete rejection or nonacceptance of Yiddish as a Jewish language on a par with other modern European languages is a thing of the past. Vestiges of that attitude linger, however. Students will ask naive questions such as; "When did Yiddish become a language, it never used to be?" or "Isn't Yiddish just a German dialect?" or "Isn't Yiddish just a mixture of many languages from the countries in which the Jews lived?" and even "What's the difference between Yiddish and Hebrew--aren't they the same?"

Not so much because this lack of linguistic sophistication represents a barrier to a valid reading of Yiddish Literature in English Translation, but simply as a part of their general liberal and Jewish education, the students should be lifted out of their naivete with regard to language. This can best be accomplished by (1) exposing them to the Indo-European hypothesis, (2) explaining the linguistic notion "drift,"(3)as a point of reference, relating something about the history of English, (4)briefly recounting the history of Yiddish, and(5)by way of comparison, showing how Hebrew is related to the other Semitic languages.

M. Weinreich's aphorism, "A language is a dialect with an Army and a Navy" is helpful, as is the following quotation from George Lyman Kittredge, the great Chaucerian and Shakespearian scholar and philologist: "A dialect is not a degraded literary language; a literary language is an elevated dialect."

6. Condescension

A preconception about Yiddish cultural creativity, that it is essentially cozy, sentimental, and humorous, does not prepare many students for the aesthetic, emotional,

and intellectual heights they will have to scale to keep pace with the literature they will be reading. Such a student may be expecting simple, pietistic morality tales, or quaint and humorous shtetl anecdotes. Such students need to have their sights lifted with regard to Yiddish. They have to be made aware, for example, of the work of the YIVO over the last 50years, of the work of literary historians such as Kalman Marmor, Max Erik, M.Wiener, and Zalmen Reisin, of folklorists such as I.Bernstein, J.L.Cahan, and S. Ansky; of linguists and lexicographers, such as J. Joffe, A. Harkavy, Nokhum Shtif, N. Stutchkoff, M.Mieace, Yudl Mark, and Max and Uriel Weinreich; of psychologists and educators, such as Leibush Lehrer, A.Golomb, H.S. Kasdan, and A.A. Roback; of economists and demographers, such as J. Leshchinsky, Ben-Adir, Liebman Hersh and Moshe Shalit; of critics and essayists such as Baal-Makhshoves, N. Meisel, S.Niger,A Koralnik, B. Rivkin, K.Marmor,S.Gorelik; historians such as S.Dubnow, E.Tcherikover,I.Zinberg,J.I.Trunk, S.Ginsburg, and J.Shatzky; of the scores of political analysts, writers, and leaders; of the many translations into and out of Yiddish; and, of course, the great literary achievements of the masters of Yiddish prose and poetry. Perhaps the greatest misconception is an ignorance of the tremendous scope of Yiddish cultural creativity, how much of it there is. A comment heard often from students of the class was: "I didn't realize all this was going oh in Yiddish!

Some Concluding Remarks

The aim of a two-year undergraduate program in Jewish Studies should be an introduction to the understanding of the Jewish civilization as one of Western man's primary responses to the needs of the human predicament. The time has come in the post-Auschwitz age to academically present a systematic study of the Jewish people and their traditions as important elements in world culture. The student of Jewish Studies should be exposed to an appreciation of the history, culture, and literary traditions of the Jewa

as an influential force in the history of men, and to the dynamics of Judaism as an ethnic religion. The student should also be taught that Jewish Studies is not just an attempt, however important, in discovering one's identity, but he must be made aware of the laborious work involved in a critical, disciplined study of origins, sources, and materials.

The author has pioneered the first two-year undergraduate program in Jewish Studies at LA Valley College which is designed to meet these needs. The program insists upon a solid introduction to Hebrew Language studies. To this core the students adds a variety of courses, some required, some optional. The program includes classes in Hebrew language, literature, civilization, philosophy, history, sociology, Yiddish literature, and Jewish American literature.[13] Administrative insight into the importance of the program proved to be present at the very beginning. Not wanting to be accused with helping to perpetuate the misconceptions and misunderstandings which underlie individual and institutional bias and racism that have plagued Jews for centuries, the administration staffed overwhelmingly by non-Jews supported the innovation of the program without any visible static.

The student interest in Jewish Studies seems inexhaustible. This is gratifying and makes all personal sacrifices worthwhile. The program can, indeed, generate new courses such as Sephardic culture, Holocaust literature, Jewish art and music, Jewish folklore, etc. In all these fields there is a considerable corpus of scholarly literature. The Valley College library, the Hebrew Teachers Colleges, UCLA, and others, have impressive holdings in most of these areas. The program can introduce new out of class events such as weekend retreats ("Shabbatons"); and class visits to Jewish theatre, exhibits, museum, etc. A new offering would be circumscribed only by the aims, and restrictions of a community college(e.g., it must beoof lower dividion standing), and the competency

of the Jewish Studies faculty.

The Jewish Studies Program at Valley is already serving as a lower division model for identifying aims, objectives, and philosophy in emerging Jewish Studies offerings at community colleges in the district. Future objectives include a detailed investigation of Jewish Studies proposals in junior colleges across the nation, a comparison with four-year colleges and universities, including Hebrew Teachers Colleges, as well as relevant models of Jewish Studies education found in other countries, especially in Israel. In the meantime it can be said that the attitudes towards Jewish Studies of a hitherto neglected segment of the college population must now be considered in evaluating the teaching of Judaica on a college level.

Footnotes

1. The standard works are these: Arnold J. Band, "Jewish Sudies in American Liberal-Arts Colleges and Universities," American Jewish Year Book, 67, 1966, pp. 3-30; id., "Jewish Studies in American Liberal Arts Colleges and Universities," in Oscar I. Janowsky, ed., The Education of American Jewish Teachers, (Boston, 1967), pp. 255-264; Meir Ben-Horin, "Some Implications for Jewish Educational Institutions of Jewish Studies in American Institutions," in Oscar I. Janowsky, ed., op. cit., pp. 265-278; Leon H. Jick, editor, The Teaching of Judaica in American Universities (New York, 1970); Alfred Jospe, Jewish Studies in American Colleges and Universities (2nd. ed. Washington, D.C., n.d.); id., Jewish Studies in American Colleges and Universities, A Catalogue (Washington, 1972); Abraham I. Katsh, Hebrew in American Higher Education (New York, 1941); id., Hebrew Language, Literature and Culture in American Institutions of Higher Learning (New York, 1950); id., "Hebraic Studies in American Higher Education: An Evaluation of Current Trends," Jewish Social Studies, January 1959, pp. 15-21; Judah Lapson, Hebrew in Colleges and Universities (New York, 1958); Jacob Neusner, "What to do about Judaism," Bulletin of the American Academy of Religion", Winter, 1967, pp. 10-13; id., op. cit., Spring, 1968, pp. 21-23; id., op. cit., Summer, 1968, pp. 8-9; id., "Graduate Education in Judaice: Problems and Prospects," Journal of the American Academy of Religion, December 1969, pp. 321-330; id., Modes of Jewish Studies in the University, in Paul Ramsey and John F. Wilson, eds., The Study of Religion in Colleges and Universities (Princeton, 1970), pp. 159-189; id., "Two settings for Jewish Studies, "Conservative Judaism," Fall, 1972, pp. 27-40; id., "Judaic/Jewish Studies in the Welch Report," Bulletin of the Council on the Study of Religion," October 1972, pp.3-5; Erich Rosenthal, "The Current Status of Jewish Social Research," Midstream, April 1971, pp. 58-62; David Rudavsky, "Hebraic Studies in Colleges and Universities," Religious Education, July-August 1964, pp.330-337; id., "Hebraic Studies in American Colleges and Universities with Special Reference to New York University," in Israel, T. Naamani and David Rudawsky, eds.,

Doron: Hebraic Studies (New York, 1965); id., "Current Trends in Hebraic Studies in American Colleges and Universities," Bulletin of the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages, March 1972, pp. 36-42; Marshal Sklare, "The Problem of Contemporary Jewish Studies," Midstream, April 1970, pp. 27-35.

Current dialogue on this subject may be found in the pages of Yivo and the American Jewsh Yearbook, and in the newsletters of the National Association of Professors of Hebrew in American Institutions of Higher Learning (NAPH) and the Association for Jewish Studies (AJS). Also, important information may be found in the symposiums on Jewish Studies sponsored by Brandeis University (April 1972) and Conservative Judaism (Winter 1973)

2. Arnold J. Band, Letter to the membership of the Association for Jewish Studies (n.d.).

3. Jewish Studies in American Colleges and Universities, edited by Alfred Jospe and published by B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation (1972), lists 324 secular colleges in the U.S. which offer at least one Judaic course, forty schools with undergraduate majors, and twenty-five with graduate programs. L.A. Valley College is the only school listed in the authoritative guide that offers an A.A. degree in Jewish Studies.

4. Information in this section is gathered from various publications of L.A. Valley College, and the California Junior College Association (Sacramento).

5. In the decade 1950-1960, the San Fernando Valley was one of the fastest growing urban areas in the United States with a percentage growth of 110%. The decade 1960-1970 saw a much slower growth rate, and the population at the end of 1971 was estimated to be 1,246, 177. Following the pattern of growth in the general community, the Jewish population trend in the Valley has been on a continual upswing. The overall Jewish population count in the Greater Los Angeles area is nearly 600,000 of whom approximately 180,000 live in the 21 communities, including North Hollywood,, Van Nuys, Encino, Sherman Oaks, etc., served by LAVC.

6. The author has written an account of the Jewish Studies Program at LAVC and the reasons for its successful genesis which has been submitted for publication in the Bulletin of the Council of the Study of Religion. This is the only paper

written exclusively on a Judaica program at a "people's College".

7. The books selected are these: The Tales of Rabbi Nachman, by Martin Buber; Benjamin III, by Mendele Mocher Seforim; The Golden Tradition, by Lucy Davidowicz; The Tevve Stories and Others, by Sholom Aleikhem; Manakhen Mendl, by Sholom Aleikhem; The Great Fair, by Sholom Aleikhem; Yoshe Kalb, by I.B. Singer; The Magician of Lublin, by I.B. Singer; The Manor, by I.B. Singer; A Bintel Brief, by Isaac Metzker.

8. The one exception is The History of the Jewish People course which is taught as a sweeping survey of the 4000-year-old saga of the Jewish people beginning with patriarchial origins and ending with the contemporary Jewish condition in the major areas of the world.

9. Modern Hebrew Reader and Grammar, Vol. I, by Reuben Wallemrod and Abraham Aaroni (copyright, 1942).

10. See the author's note, "Latest EBR Chapter Established in California," published in Iggeret: A Newsletter of the National Association of Professors of Hebrew in American Institutions of Higher Learning, No. 26 (June 1973), pp.4.

11. See above p. 14.

12. The following section was prepared by Mr. Marvin Zuckerman, lecturer in Yiddish, at LA Valley College.

13. General Course in the literature of history of Yiddish are rare in American colleges and universities, and totally non-existent at community colleges except for LAVC. So-called "Yiddish literature classes in translation", when offered at some schools of higher learning, are in reality German-Jewish literature (Mendelsohn, Heine, Schnitzler, Krauss, Kafka, Feuchtwanger, Anne Frank, Nelly Sachs, etc.) or a Jewish-American Literature class which stresses Jewish literature (not Yiddish per se), from shtetl to suburbia, and concentrating on the latter

14. See above pp. 3-7.